

Message Text

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65

ACTION MCT-01

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6649

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1288

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, EAIR, IC, US

SUBJECT: TWO HIJACKING AND ICELANDIC PLANNING

REF: A) REYKJAVIK 1211; B) REYKJAVIK 1225 (EXDIS)

1. SUMMARY. THE HIJACKING EPISODE ON SEPTEMBER 11 WAS HANDLED BY ICELANDIC AUTHORITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH PLANS PREPARED SEVERAL YEARS AGO AND RAN FAIRLY SMOOTHLY. COPIES OF THE ICELANDIC HIJACKING REPORT ON THE TWA INCIDENT, THE HIJACKING PLAN, AND THE BOMB THREAT PLAN WILL BE SENT UNDER SEPARATE COVER TO EUR/NE AND M/CT. COPIES WERE PREVIOUSLY FORWARDED BY GOI TO FAA AND THE ICELANDIC DEFENSE FORCE. A FEW HIGHLIGHTS AND REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

2. REPORT HIGHLIGHTS. AFTER RECEIVING WORD OF THE HIJACKING, THE AIRPORT MANAGER CONTACTED THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WHICH WAS AWARE OF THE DETAILS (HAVING BEEN INFORMED EARLIER BY THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR). THE FONMIN AUTHORIZED LANDING AND SERVICING OF AIRCRAFT. AIRPORT MANAGER WAS ON THE SCENE BY 0900 AND MET WITH ICELANDIC OFFICIALS AND "DEFENSE FORCE OFFICERS CONCERNED." BY 1035 ALL ACCESSES TO SERVICE AREAS FOR AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN CLOSED OFF AND EACH PERSON WAS IN HIS PREASSIGNED PLACE.

3. AIRPORT MANAGER AND CHIEF OF POLICE TOOK PLACES AT CONTROL STATION (TELECOMMUNICATION VEHICLE OWNED BY DEFENSE

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FORCE) TOGETHER WITH A FEW DEFENSE FORCE OFFICERS. STATION

WAS 500 METERS FROM PREARRANGED SITE FOR INCOMING TWA. AIRPORT MANAGER WAS IN CHARGE (AND KEPT TOUCH WITH FONMIN THROUGH AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL) EXCEPT FOR POLICE PROCEDURES.

4. AT 1040 ON HEARING FROM THE TWO JETS, THE FLIGHT CAPTAINS WERE INFORMED "ABOUT THE REACTION ON THE GROUND" AND TOLD WHERE TO PARK. AFTER THAT AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL WAS IN CONSTANT RADIO CONTACT WITH THE JETS. FURTHER AIR TRAFFIC WAS PROHIBITED (UNLESS SPECIALLY APPROVED) AND REFUELING BEGUN AT 1128.

5. TWA CAPTAIN ASKED THAT TWO SUITCASES BY TRANSFERRED TO ACCOMPANYING JET. SUITCASES WERE SEARCHED BY TECHNICIANS BEFORE TRANSFER MADE.

6. ABOUT THIS TIME MESSAGES RECEIVED FROM UK SAYING JETS COULD NOT ENTER BRITISH AIRSPACE. THESE WERE PASSED ON TO FLIGHT CAPTAIN.

7. EMBASSY DCM WAS AT AIRPORT AND IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH CONTROL STATION.

8. THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATOR TALKED WITH AIRPORT MANAGER BY TELEPHONE SHORTLY AFTER JETS LEFT GANDER AND WANTED TO FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS. THE DEFENSE FORCE OPENED A COMMUNICATION LINK WITH WASHINGTON WHILE TWA IN ICELAND.

9. PLANES LEFT AT 1315 AND 1317 AND AIRPORT REOPENED TO TRAFFIC.

10. AMONG RECOMMENDATIONS WAS REQUEST FOR FONMIN REPRESENTATIVE AT CONTROL STATION WITH AIRPORT MANAGER AND IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH FONMINISTER IN CASE OF HAVING TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE HIJACKERS SO LATTER'S DECISIONS AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY. TO FURTHER IMPROVE SECURITY, A SPECIAL SECURITY UNIT SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AT AIRPORT TERMINAL. ALSO OF IMPORTANCE WAS THE NEED TO HANDLE PRESS RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO AIRPORT MANAGER TOO MANY WERE SPEAKING FOR GOI. HE TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WANTED TO BE SOLE SPOKESMAN.

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QQM COMMENT: COMPARISON OF REPORT AND PLANS INDICATES GOOD COORDINATION AMONG THE VARIOUS ENTITIES CONCERNED WITH AIRPORT SECURITY. HOWEVER, AS INDICATED REFTTEL (B), PLAN BASED ON ASSUMPTION "THINGS CAN BE WORKED OUT." IN REVIEWING CURRENT HIJACKING PLAN WITH EARLIER VERSION, EMBASSY NOTES, FOR EXAMPLE, SIGNIFICANT DELETION OF ARTICLE ON BLOCKADING VEHICLE OR REMOVING AIR FROM TIRES SHOULD FONMINISTER CONSIDER USE OF

FORCE.

BLAKE

NOTE BY OC/T: PASSED TO NSC PER MR. MACFARLANE S/S-O
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